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THE
NEW THEOLOGY
IN
THE NURSERY.

Author Unknown.



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THE NEW THEOLOGY IN THE NURSERY.

Mrs. Martineau Kuenen (who has been attending various inaugural and other addresses at Presbyterian seminaries and churches): Now Johnny, as it is raining to-day, you need not go out to Sunday-school at Dr. Westminster's church. I will give you a lesson at home.

Johnny: Mamma, shall I say my catechism?

Mrs. M. K.: I think not. You know they are revising the Standards, and are going to let down the tender grass for the lambs of the flock.* But tell me Johnny, what is it which teaches us how to be saved, and about Heaven and God?

Johnny: The Bible.

* PROOF TEXTS: Report on "Revision to the General Assembly, 1891.

Mrs. M. K.: Yes; but there is something else.

Johnny: I don't know of anything else.

Mrs. M. K.: There is the Church, you know; and the Reason.*

Johnny: Do you mean the Presbyterian Church, mamma?

Mrs. M. K.: Well, not exactly. You see the Presbyterian Church sometimes disapproves of my good friend Professor Barkis. By church, I mean Institutional Christianity.*

Johnny: Oh, I understand.

Mrs. M. K.: You have heard of Cardinal Newman, Johnny; he was a representative Christian, living in or near the world's metropolis; but he could not find God through the Bible,* striving never so hard, but he became a Roman Catholic and found God in that way.

Johnny: Then, if you can't find out how to be saved, and can't find God in the Bible, you must become a Roman Catholic.

Mrs. M. K.: Yes, it is a matter of temperament and environment, which way to God men may pursue.†

* PROOF TEXTS : Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (pp. 24, f. f.)

† (Ib. pp. 26, 28.)

Johnny: But suppose you can't find God in the Bible or in the Church, then what do you do?

Mrs. M. K.: I am glad you have asked that question, my child. You can find God through the Reason, and become a representative Christian.

Johnny: What is the Reason, mamma?

Mrs. M. K.: Oh, I don't know exactly. It embraces the Metaphysical Categories.*

Johnny: What are they, mamma?

Mrs. M. K.: They are the Holy of Holies of Nature,* my dear son, and then we have the Conscience and the Religious Feeling.*

Johnny: Are they better than the Bible and the Church

Mrs. M. K.: The Bible is infallible, but the majority of the Christian world would not assign a higher place to representative Christians who have found God through the Bible.

Johnny: Mamma, what kind of temperament and environment have I got? Must I find God through the Bible? I think perhaps I had better find him through the Reason, if that is the Holy of Holies of Nature.

* PROOF TEXT: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 26, 28).

Mrs. M. K. : Never mind about that just now, Tell me, does your teacher at Sunday-school tell you anything about God?

Johnny: O yes; I know the answer to the question in the Catechism: "What is God?"

Mrs. M. K.: But we need a new doctrine of God.* You know Prof. Barkis tells us that God is love.* I must ask your teacher to read his Inaugural Address.

Johnny: Does God love sin, mamma?

Mrs. M. K.: I am not talking about that ; but listen to the new doctrine of God. I am surprised that your teacher should not have seen it (reading). . . . "Irregularities, breaks, misfits, broken joints, deformities, mutilations, abortions, collisions, discords imperfections all the way along and God back of it all, pushing on His way. . . Ah, brethren; God's thoughts are not as our thoughts. His ways are not as our ways. The designs by which He works are not patterns for patent office purposes, nor pieces of dilettante china decorations, nor æsthetic models in waxwork. . . Flaws? Yes; but look at the Plan, massive with the lines and the curves of the

* PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (pp. 46, 47, 48).

Infinite and the Eternal. . . . Frictions? Yes; but look at the matchless correlations of energy, the actions and interactions of endlessly articulated forces that determine the balancing of the dewdrops, and swing Jupiters and suns and systems along their vast and mighty courses. Discords? Yes; but listen to the Eternal Anthem that rings from star to star, and ravishes the eternities."*

Johnny: Mamma, is that out of the Bible?

Mrs. M. K.: Not exactly, dear; that is part of the new doctrine of God. It is by Dr. Heavens. It doesn't repel me as much as the answer in the Catechism which you have learned at Sunday-school.

Johnny: Is every word in the Bible true, mamma?

Mrs. M. K.: Oh no, Johnny. One of the barriers to the Bible is the belief that it is all true † But only the essentials are true.‡

Johnny: Teacher says that the Bible is the Word of God, and that whatever the Word of God says must be true.

* PROOF TEXTS: Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration, by Prof. L. J. Evans (pp 14, 15).

† PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 34).

‡ *Ib.* (p. 36).

Mrs. M. K.: That is a ghost of modern Evangelicalism to frighten children.* God inspired only the concept.†

Johnny: Is the concept the same thing as a Metaphysical Category.

Mrs. M. K.: I will have to ask Prof. Barkis about that. You see he has been very much misunderstood. But when you get older, you will learn all about such things.

Johnny: Mamma, what a wise man Moses must have been to have written about the Creation, and all those things in Exodus and Deuteronomy!

Mrs. M. K.: Moses didn't write those books. Those were written by Elohist and a number of other men.

Johnny: Did not Moses write Exodus?

Mrs. M. K.: No, that was written by P and JE.‡ Moses may have been the Redactor of part of the books.

Johnny: What is a Redactor?

Mrs. M. K.: A Redactor is a man who puts

*PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural address of Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 35).

† Ib (p. 32).

‡ PROOF TEXTS: Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament by Prof. G. R. Driver. Edited by Prof. Briggs (p. 20).

books written by other men together, so as to pretend that he wrote them himself.

Johnny: Next to Moses, I think Isaiah was one of the best men in the Old Testament.

Mrs. M. K.: (laughing heartily): Which Isaiah do you mean?

Johnny: I mean Isaiah the Prophet.

Mrs. M. K.: Oh, you foolish boy; we don't know that Isaiah wrote half of the book which bears his name.*

Johnny: Teacher says that Jesus said that Moses wrote the Law, and that the Law was the same as the five books of Moses.

Mrs. M. K.: O, that is a circumstantial. Jesus was speaking so as to suit himself to his hearers.

Johnny: Is it right to say what is not true, so as to suit your teaching to your hearers?

Mrs. M. K.: I have told you, Johnny, that these are circumstantials, not essentials.

Johnny: Then some of the circumstantials in the Bible are not true.

Mrs. M. K.: It is not a pleasant task to point out the errors in the Sacred Scriptures.†

* PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 33).

† Ib. (p. 34).

Johnny: I thought you said just now that it was infallible.

Mrs. M. K.: Only as a rule of faith and practice. It is not infallible when it contains fibs (laughing to herself).

Johnny: What is faith, mamma?

Mrs. M. K.: O, that is a doctrinal question. You must not ask me about dogma. Faith is belief.

Johnny: Then if the Bible is an infallible rule of belief, I ought to believe whatever it tells me.

Mrs. M. K.: O, no. That is a question for Christian Consciousness to decide.

Johnny: Whose Christian Consciousness?

Mrs. M. K.: Dear Prof. Barkis's Christian Consciousness.

Johnny: Mamma, tell me about Daniel in the lion's den.

Mrs. M. K.: O, Johnny, that is a circumstantial. Prof. Browning has shown that the Book of Daniel is full of untruths.

Johnny: Is the story about Jonah and the whale a circumstantial, too?

Mrs. M. K.: Of course. Everything in the Bible, which is not a theophany, is a circumstantial.

Johnny: Are the Psalms of King David theophanies or circumstantial?

Mrs. M. K.: O, you silly boy. Moses did not write the Pentateuch. David wrote only a few of the psalms. Isaiah did not write one-half of the book which bears his name. Solomon did not write Proverbs or Ecclesiastes. The names of the mass of old Testament authors are lost in oblivion.*

Johnny: Why, mamma; you are not leaving me any Bible.

Mrs. M. K.: If that is destroying the Bible the bible is destroyed already.*

Johnny: Then read me something in the New Testament. That is truer than the Old. Read to me about the raising of Lazarus?

Mrs. M. K.: Let me see, that is in the Gospel according to St. John. Well, it is not yet quite settled that John did not write that, so I suppose I may read it. But remember, Johnny, if it were possible to resolve all the miracles of the Old Testament into extraordinary acts of Divine Providence, using the forces and forms of nature in accordance with the laws of nature; and if we could explain all

* PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 33).

the miracles of Jesus, . . . from His use of mind cure or hypnotism or any other occult power,—still I claim that nothing essential would be lost from the miracles of the Bible.*

Johnny: Were the Apostles hypnotized?

Mrs. M. K.: I have not taken a brief† to tell you about that.

Johnny: Was Adam a good man, mamma?

Mrs. M. K.: Yes. He was created sinless, but was not possessed of that moral excellence, which comes only through discipline and heavenly training.*

Johnny: The Catechism says that he was created after the image of God.

Mrs. M. K.: Yes; but the Elohist had a very imperfect idea of God. As I have told you, we need a new doctrine of God.

Johnny: Was Adam as good as my papa?

Mrs. M. K.: No; your papa whose temptations have been a means of grace, has made his progress by the curved lines of sin, not by the straight line of obedience.‡

Johnny: How did the prophets know so much about the Messiah, Mamma?

* PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 37).

† *Ib.*, 2d Ed. (p. 95).

‡ *Ib.* 1st Ed., (p. 50).

Mrs. M. K.: Many of these predictions have been reversed by history; and the great body of the Messianic predictions has not only never been fulfilled, but cannot now be fulfilled, for the reason that its own time is passed forever.*

Johnny: But Jesus Christ said they would all be fulfilled, didn't He?

Mrs. M. K.: Yes, child; but God recalled his decree.†

Johnny: Is recalling His decree, the same as breaking His promise?

Mrs. M. K.: That is part of the "new doctrine of God."

Johnny: I suppose that my little sister Jennie looks down from Heaven, and wonders that we are puzzled by all these things.

Mrs. M. K.: Hush, Johnny! Jennie is not in Heaven. You are neglecting those vast periods of time which elapse between death and judgment.‡ Jennie is in the Middle State. It is a heavenly university.§

* PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 38).

† Ib. (p. 39).

‡ Ib. (pp. 53, 54).

§ Ib. 2d. Ed (p. 109).

Johnny: Is that an essential or a circumstantial?

Mrs. M. K.: That is an essential. We don't go at first to Heaven or Hell. We go to the Middle State. The bugbear of a judgment immediately after death should be banished from the world.*

Johnny: Then Jesus did not die to save us from punishment.

Mrs. M. K.: Yes; but the whole race of Man is redeemed.† I think of the heathen who have never heard of Christ. They would have to be punished for rejecting Him.

Johnny: Then I shall spend my next allowance on candy.

Mrs. M. K.: That will be enough for to-day I must see about that Sunday-school teacher. I think he must be a traditionalist.

Johnny: Mamma, If I don't give any more money for the redeemed heathen, I shall have more to spend on the Fourth of July.

Mrs. M. K.: To be sure and I will take you to see the fireworks; but before that Prof. Barkis is going to blow the breast-works of

* PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs, 2d Ed., (p. 54).

† *Ib.*, 1st Ed., (p. 55).

traditionalism to atoms.* I will take you to that.

Johnny: Mamma. Shall I put the Bible carefully on the table again?

Mrs M. K.: O, no; put it on the shelf with those novels. The Bible as a book is paper, print and binding—nothing more.†

Johnny: Papa says he carried one in his pocket all through the war.

Mrs. M. K.: What nonsense. It has no magical virtue in it, and no halo enclosing it. It will not stop a bullet any better than a mass book ‡ Next Sunday, I will tell you all about the historical errors in the Bible. You mustn't go back to that traditionalistic Sunday-school again. And now let us go down and hear Dr. Madison Park preach on the immorality of the Patriarchs. It is sure to be instructive.

* PROOF TEXTS: Inaugural Address by Prof. C. A. Briggs (p. 41).

† Ib. (p. 30).

‡ Ib. (p. 55).



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